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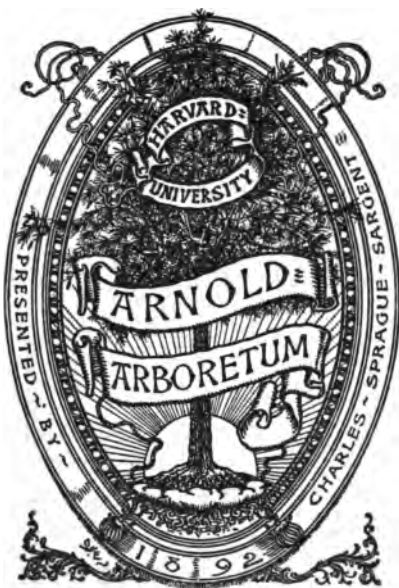
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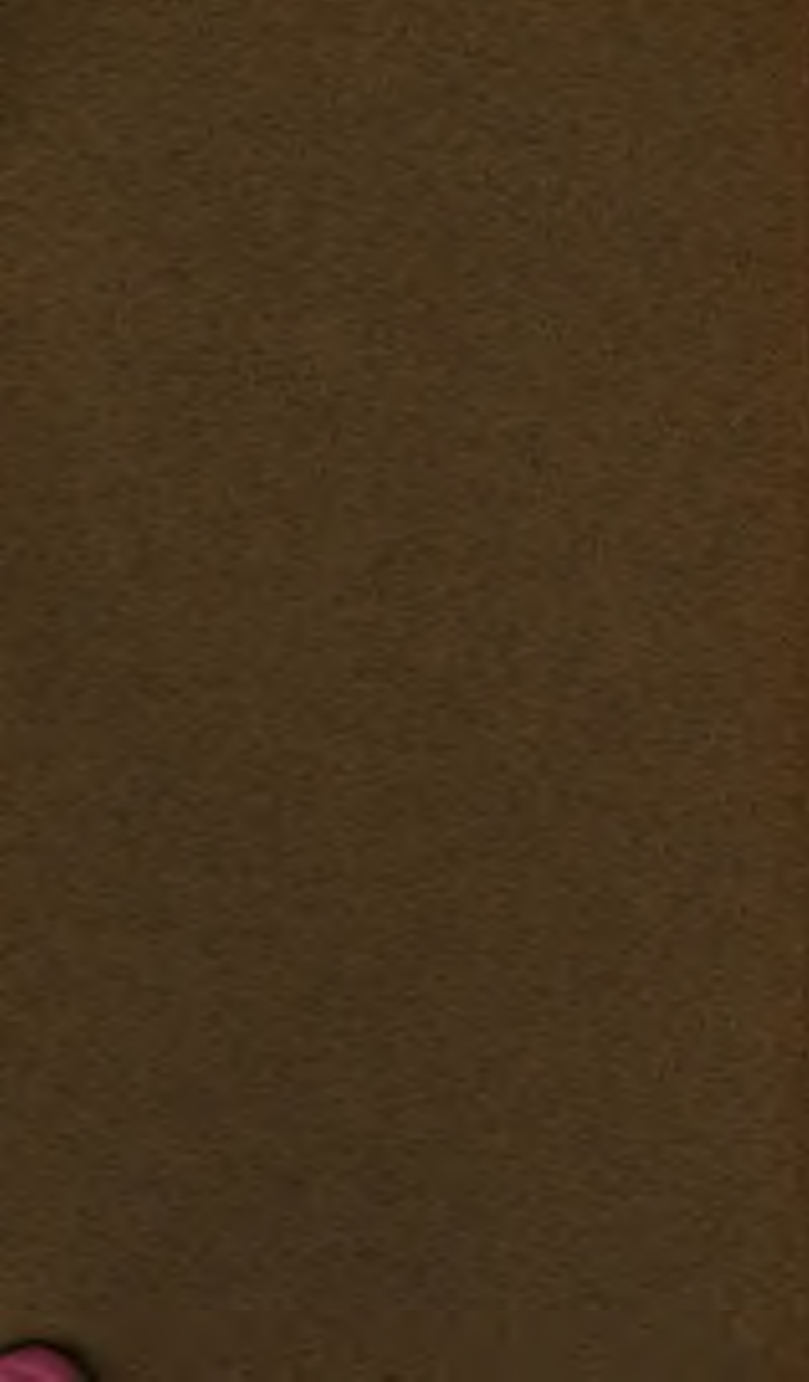
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Bartram's Garden

John Bartram





Bartram's Garden

Philadelphia, Pa.

By Darby car on Walnut or Pine Street to 54th Street
and Woodland Avenue, then a walk of $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

John Bartram

Born near Darby, Pa., 23rd March, 1699

Died at Bartram's Garden, 22nd September, 1777

Issued by The John Bartram Association
March, 1904

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PHILADELPHIA



JOHN BARTRAM

From a painting in possession of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Bartram's Garden

John Bartram

On the west bank of the Schuylkill River, not far from where it runs into the Delaware, lies Bartram's Garden, a garden that was planted more than a hundred and seventy years ago, and had not then its like anywhere in the New World.

In those far-away days, Indians of a friendly tribe came and went like apparitions ; what was it to them, I wonder, to come out of Penn's woods or step from their canoes into this tended garden ; was there not a little catch in the breath, and, for an instant, a misgiving as to whether hunting-grounds were all ? We know that, later, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and others, weighted with affairs, felt the charm of the garden and rested there. And time and change and neglect have not quite broken the spell. The charm is there to-day,—elusive ; much of it, indeed, due to time, for the place is shrouded in memories, an Indian-summer haze about the life of one simple, dignified, happy, tireless man, John Bartram.

It is no little deed to make a garden, that "greatest refreshment to the spirits of man." But to make a garden in a wilderness ; to make the wilderness tributary to it ; and it tributary to

the great centres of learning and thought, on another continent : that is a great deed.

John Bartram "conceived the idea of establishing a *Botanic Garden* for the reception and cultivation of the various vegetables, natives of the country, as well as exotics ; and of travelling for the discovery and acquisition of them."

He set about it in, say, 1730. When he began his travels, our neighbors, the Alleghanies, were mapped as *The Endless Mountains*. All his life there was peril almost from the time he left his own door. Yet he wrote, in 1762—I copy from Dr. Darlington* :—

If peaceable times come, I intend to double my diligence, for I am better stocked with materials than formerly, having now searched our North America from New England to near Georgia, and from the sea-coast to Lake Ontario and many branches of the Ohio ; so that now there are very few plants in all that space of ground but what I have observed,—nay, have most of them growing in my own garden.

When he was almost seventy years of age, under orders as Botanist Royal for the British Colonies in America, he explored the St. John's river in Florida. By the time that the United States was a year old, John Bartram's life-work was done ; he died September 22d, 1777, while the British army was making its way from

* *Memorials of Bartram and Marshall*, by William Darlington, M. D., LL. D.



In Bartram's Garden, showing the Lady Petre Pear-tree



East Front of the Bartram House

the Brandywine to Philadelphia; he naturally feared that that army would "lay waste his darling garden, the nursling of almost half a century." Yet he had lived with one feeling about it ever,—“If I die a martyr to Botany, God's will be done; His will be done in all things.”

The great usefulness of the Garden began when, doubtless at the suggestion of James Logan, John Bartram sent his diaries to Peter Collinson in London, a man devoted to science and always a friend of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvanians. This initiated a correspondence in which these two helped each other, rallied each other, loved each other, for nearly fifty years, without ever meeting face to face. Through Peter Collinson, John Bartram's correspondence extended to all the distinguished naturalists of his time. It was he who engaged, first Lord Petre, then Philip Miller and the Dukes of Richmond and Norfolk, to subscribe an annual allowance of thirty guineas to meet the expenses of Bartram in procuring for them American plants to adorn their gardens. Something was consigned to Peter Collinson,—seeds, roots, plants, cuttings,—one box, twenty boxes, by almost every ship that sailed from here to London. And much came back in return—tulips and carnations, “nails, calico, Russia linen, and the clothes for my boys.”

These were times of suspense. At the best, letters were nearer two months than one in crossing the ocean. A letter from Linnæus to Bar-

tram, dated August 10, 1750, came to hand two years after it was written. Bartram's Journal of his Travels to the Five Nations and Lake Ontario, sent in the spring of 1744, was taken by the French, and did not reach England till June, 1750. In 1763, there was a time of concern about boxes of seeds that the Spaniards had captured. And there were minor trials by sailing vessels: boxes arrived with a "proper hole" for access at the corner of each box, and in each a warm rat's nest made of the shrubs; one letter was eaten in large holes in four places by some mischievous insect, showing the need of wrapping letters in dry tobacco-leaves. John Bartram writes November the 22d, 1764:

I send twenty-two boxes, consigned to thee. * * * I have also sent a little box * * * containing above one hundred different kinds of seeds. * * * There is a parcel of Chinquapins and Willow-oak Acorns that was missed in the last packed sixteen boxes by the extreme hurry we were in for above two weeks, day and night,—*First-day* not excepted. The Captain positively affirmed he would sail by such a day, and leave them if they were not brought before, and now he stays for sailors.

But these were trifles. The wonder is that most of the cargoes arrived and in tolerable condition.

John Bartram's enthusiasm was buoyant from first to last. "I love Natural History dearly."



The Kitchen of the Bartram House



The Sitting-room

And how inspiring was Peter Collinson's eagerness !

Aug. 28, 1736 : Send more Black Walnuts, Long Walnuts, and both sorts of Hickory, Acorns of all sorts, Sweet Gum, Dog-wood, Red Cedar Berries, Allspice, Sassafras.

Feb. 3, 1736-7 : These fine Lady's Slippers don't let escape, for they are my favourite plants.

Feb. 3, 1741-2 : Rose Laurel, White Cedar, White Pine, and Sassafras, thou cannot send too much,—for we can never have enough of them.

July 20, 1756 : I hope my old friend will not expose himself to Indian cruelties ; and yet I want a dozen boxes of seeds.

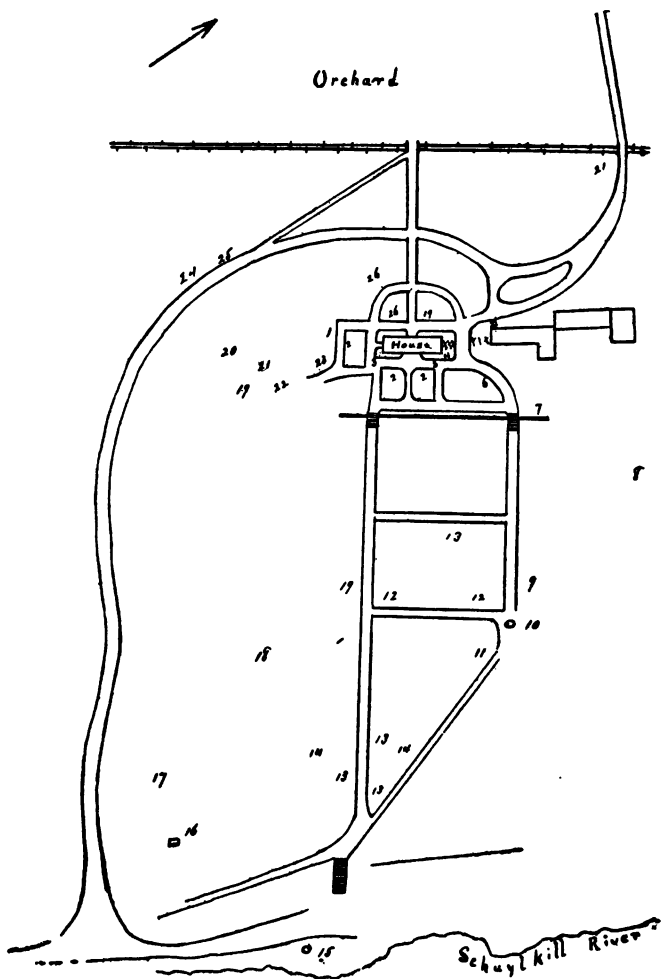
Even this :

Apr. 1, 1762 : I am always careful of your earth ; for I have raised many odd plants out of it that thou never would think to send seeds of.

But here we come near the heart of the matter:—

June 30, 1763 : O, Botany! delightfulest of all sciences! There is no end of thy gratifications. All botanists will join with me in thanking my dear John for his unwearied pains to gratify every inquisitive genius. I have sent Linnæus a specimen and one leaf of *Tipitiwitchet Sensitive**; only to him would I spare such a jewel. Pray send more specimens. I am afraid we can never raise it. Linnæus will be in raptures at the sight of it.

* *Schrankia uncinata*.



ROUGH PLAN OF BARTRAM'S GARDEN

FEBRUARY 1904

1. Bartram Oak : *Quercus heterophylla*
2. Box : *Buxus sempervirens*
3. Lady Petre Pear
4. Watering-trough
5. Jujube : *Zizyphus*
6. Yellow-wood : *Cladrastis lutea*
7. Red Mulberry : *Morus rubra*
8. *Ginkgo biloba*
9. Buttonwood : *Platanus occidentalis*
10. Cypress : *Taxodium distichum*
11. Silver Maple : *Acer saccharinum*
12. Papaw : *Asimina triloba*
13. Silverbell : *Halesia tetraptera*
14. English Filbert : *Corylus Avellana*
15. Cider-press
16. Harvey's Grave
17. *Sassafras officinale*
18. Mossy-cup Oak : *Quercus macrocarpa*
19. Sweet Buckeye : *Æsculus flava*
20. Horse-chestnut : *Æsculus Hippocastanum*
21. Hackberry : *Celtis occidentalis*
22. *Magnolia Fraseri*
23. English Walnut : *Juglans regia*
24. Red Maple : *Acer rubrum*
25. Beech : *Fagus Americana*
26. Kentucky Coffee : *Gymnocladus dioica*

The rhododendron is mentioned early and late :
 March 14, 1736-7: Sir Hans Sloane very much
 desires some seed of that fine Laurel thee
 discovered beyond the Blue Mountains, and
 some specimens of it when in flower.

May 20, 1737: * * * of the fine Laurels. No.
 102 and 108, or *Chamærhododendros*, their
 seed * * * is the worst sort of seed to
 send over for keeping; * * * we must de-
 pend on plants; so, prithee, go at a proper
 season to the nearest place, and load a pair of
 panniers or baskets with young plants, and
 set some in thy garden to take root, and send
 half a dozen at a time, for this seems to me
 to be the most elegant tree that has been dis-
 covered in your province.

Aug. 4, 1763: The great *Rhododendron* has been
 glorious beyond expression.

The consignments included not only plants, but
 animals,—chiefly insects, frogs, turtles, and birds;
 —minerals and fossils; maps; and, steadily, ob-
 servations, by one, of whom, as an observer, Peter
 Collinson said: "Nothing can escape thee." That
 tribute to his "unwearied pains to gratify
 every inquisitive genius" leads us to the signifi-
 cance of his work in helping to lay foundations
 for the higher scholarship of the last fifty years.
 Peter Collinson writes:

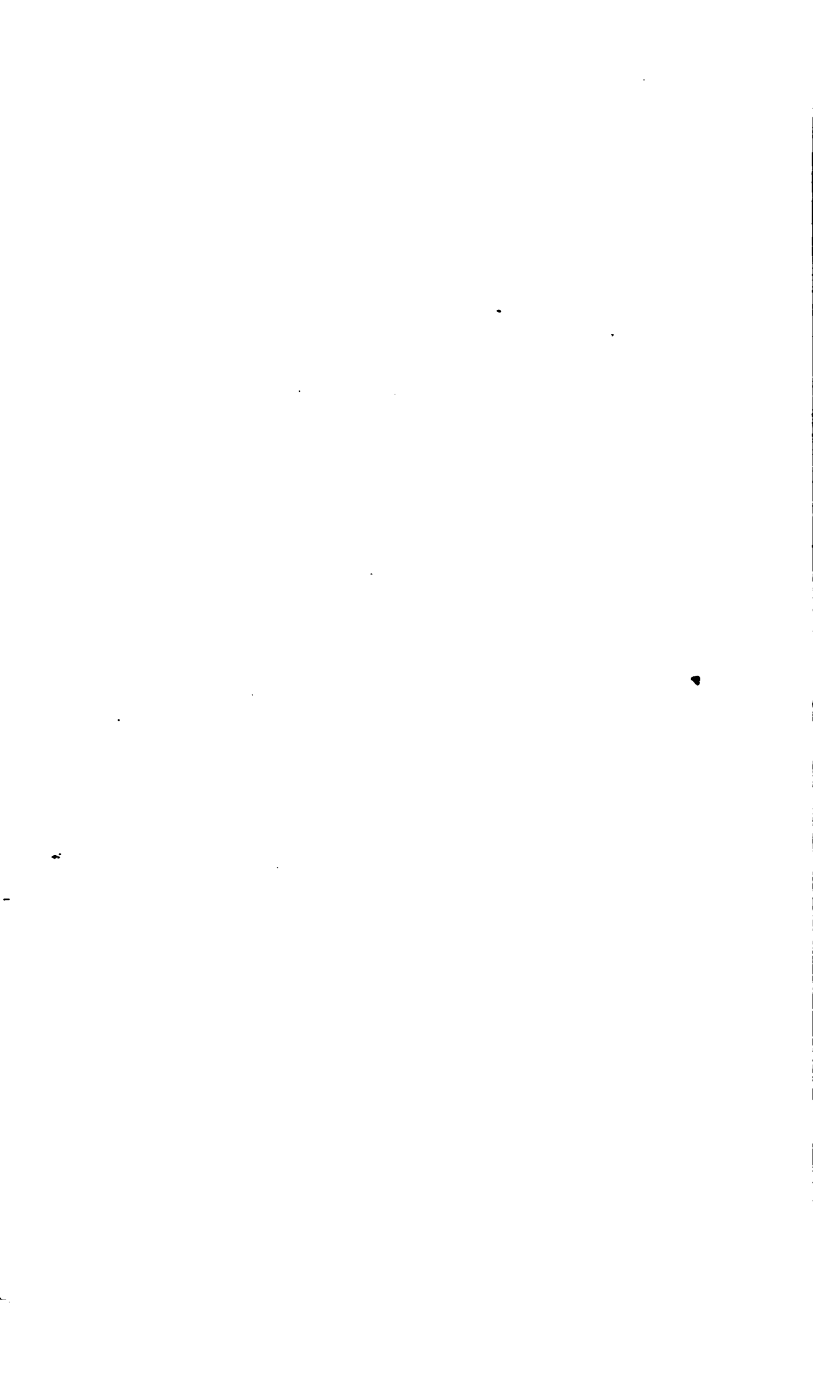
Dec. 10, 1737: * * * Thy curious letter * *
 contained so many fine remarks that it de-
 served to be read before the Royal Society; and
 thee has their thanks for it, desiring thee to



The Cypress in Bartram's Garden as it was thirty years ago.



In Bartram's Garden. The Old Watering-trough



continue thy observations, and communicate them. Pray make no apology. Thy style is much beyond what one might expect from a man of thy education. The facts are well described and very intelligible.

Aug. 20, 1753, John Bartram writes: I am now very intent upon examining the true distinguishing characters of our forest trees. * * I expect, by our worthy friend Benjamin, specimens of the evergreens of New England, which I intend to compare with ours and those of York government; so that I may give a particular account of the evergreens natural to our northern parts, which I hope to send thee this fall or next spring,—with a fuller account of our Oaks and Hickories.

Again, Peter Collinson, May 10, 1763: Think, my dear John, with what amazement and delight I, with Doctor Solander, surveyed the quire of specimens. He thinks near half are new genera. This will enrich the fountain of knowledge.

Such is the service that the Garden was doing in the world. At the same time, John Bartram's farm was giving a living to a large family. The farm, too, had to be made; he was one of an early incorporated company to bank the Schuylkill and the Delaware, by which means he rescued, out of extensive swamps, arable land, and pasture for many cattle and horses; his crops of wheat challenge the farmer of to-day; he fertilized his orchard in an ingenious way that was a "miracle

in husbandry." Besides, he was stone-mason; his interesting old house he built with his own hands, quarrying the stone on his estate in a remarkable manner; see, also, in the Garden the watering-trough and the cider-press, cut out of solid rock. And his record is fuller yet: he had to study Latin for his Botany; he was enough acquainted with medicine and surgery to be of great help to his poorer neighbors; he delineated a plan for deep-sea soundings more than a hundred years before the *Challenger* expedition. His thirst for knowledge was insatiable. His joy in the revelations of Nature was unbounded. Who wonder that he was astonished when people complained that they were tired of time!

Yet, against such odds, how was it possible to accomplish so much? According to James Parton, much is to be attributed to his superior management of his farm and his excellent treatment of his servants. Like a true Quaker, he "set his negroes free, paid them eighteen pounds a year wages, taught them to read and write, sat with them at table, and took them with him to Quaker-meeting; one of his negroes was his steward and man of business, who went to market, sold the produce, and transacted all the business of the farm and family in Philadelphia." This faithful servant's grave is where it should be,—in his master's Garden.

John Bartram's creed was a simple one; he has cut in the stone of his house, over one of the windows to the east, these two lines over his name:



The Yellow-wood in blossom in Bartram's Garden

IT IS GOD ALONE, ALMYTY LORD,
THE HOLY ONE BY ME ADOR'D,
JOHN BARTRAM 1770.

In his home, he was hospitable, gentle of speech and of admonition, teaching his children that man's duty is to "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God." On the south side of his house, cut in stone, his wife's name stands beside his own :

JOHN : ANN : BARTRAM : 1731

Truly, "There never was a purer, kinder, gentler-hearted man than John Bartram of Pennsylvania."

Is it any wonder that, for such a man, so related to Englishmen, the British army of the Revolution spared his Garden? It descended to his son John, also a botanist. But, of all his boys, it was William, always "Billy" in the letters, who found botany,—drawing even more,—his "darling delight." He was the Puc-Puggy of the Seminoles, that is, Flower-Hunter, when under the patronage of Dr. Fothergill of London, he spent the years from 1772 to 1777 in the Floridas and western parts of the Carolinas and Georgia. He lived with his brother John until his death in 1823.

For a hundred years, then, the Garden was in Bartram hands ; there followed years of cherishing in other hands ; then came a period of neglect and the threat that the growing city would encroach upon it to its extinction ; happily for Philadelphia and the world, the descendants of Bar-

tram, with sympathetic help from Thomas Meehan, then a member of the City Council, secured the purchase of the Garden by the City of Philadelphia for a public park.

The tract, since added to, contains now some thirty acres ; this it is possible to develop into a meet Memorial to John Bartram. It furnishes abundant room for play-grounds ; there is room, too, for a great nursery of material for Nature Study in the public schools ; and play-ground and flower-bed, alike, are happy means for making the children of the community alive to their inheritance from this open-minded, good man. Then, with this little five-acre spot apart, restored to the likeness of John Bartram's own simple Garden and maintained so, the memorial would be a memorial indeed.

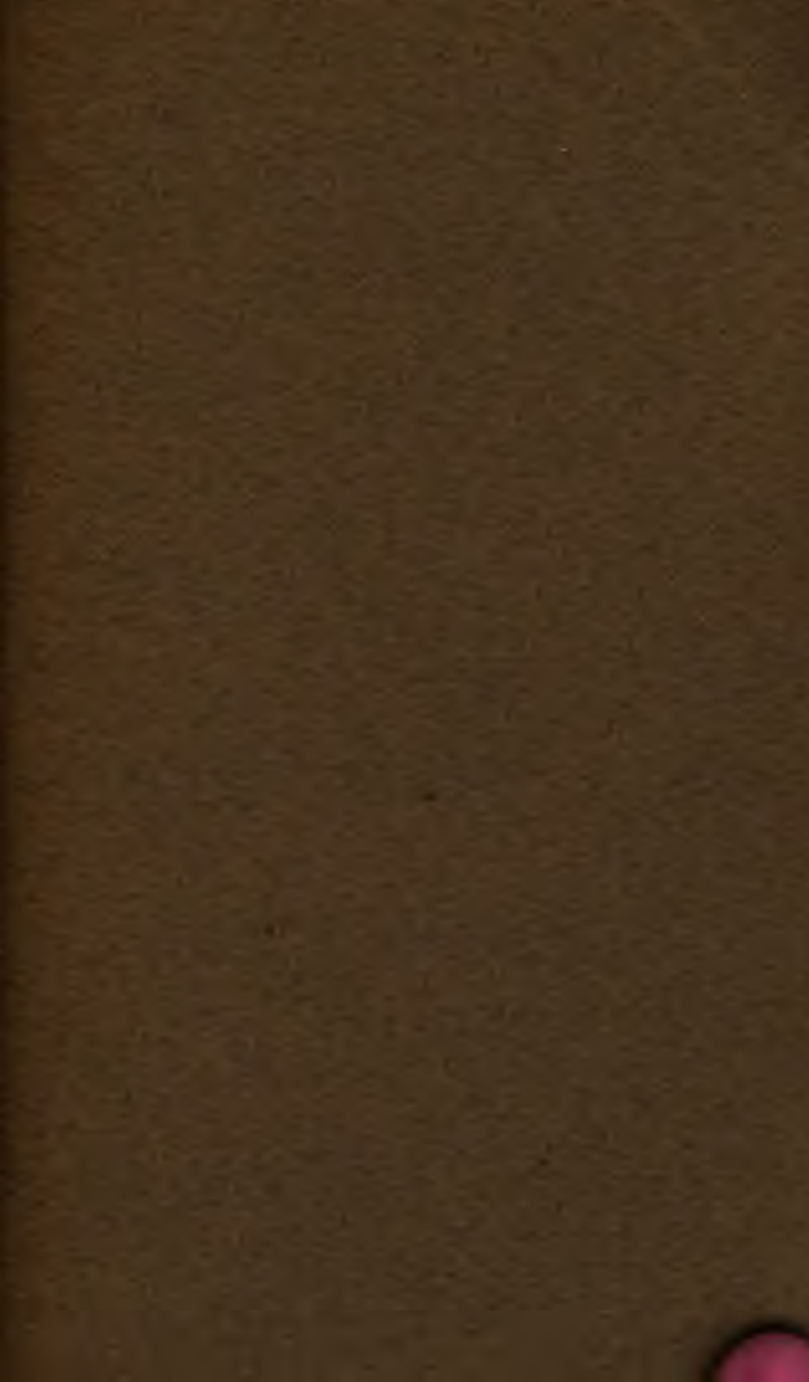
But what is left in the Garden must be promptly nursed and cherished. Some of the finest specimens are dead,—the maple by the west door, the pecan, the Christ's thorn, the cypress, giant of all. While the cypress stands, it is a colossal monument ; but a young cypress should be growing there to succeed it. The Lady Petre pear-tree bore in its hundred-and-fortieth year ; why not, then, with tender care, to its two-hundred-and-fortieth ? There are still fine plane-trees and beeches and evergreens, noble oaks, and a beautiful yellow-wood. The catkins of the English filberts are almost ready to shed their pollen on this 7th day of February. There is one little patch of galax. Let us have



WILLIAM BARTRAM

here, again, the missing plants that John Bartram discovered. Surely, the rhododendron should not languish, but flourish, here, in the delicate tints from our own Blue Mountains. It would be beautiful to see the old-fashioned roses, that have not quite died out, climbing as fondly about the windows as we may be sure they did when John Bartram tended them.

The days must come again when one may find the winter aconite spattering the foreground ; and walk neat paths, led by the daffodils ; and revel in the exquisite beauty of the silverbell-trees in bloom,—when whoever comes, in care or in glee, shall feel, along with tender beauty everywhere, the strong, still trees about him, and go quieted away.







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